

**To:** Jenkins, Laura Flynn[Jenkins.Laura@epa.gov]  
**From:** McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa  
**Sent:** Thur 8/20/2015 6:28:48 PM  
**Subject:** FW: FOR YOUR ACTION: Epoch times q's gathered and submitted today

I think one got through!

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

Public Affairs Specialist/Media Officer

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**From:** Ragland, Micah **On Behalf Of** EOC Public Information  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 20, 2015 12:10 PM  
**To:** Smith, Paula  
**Cc:** McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa  
**Subject:** Re: FOR YOUR ACTION: WSJ and Epoch times q's gathered and submitted today

Below are the approved replies to the Epoch Times inquiry. EOC PIO just gave the green light for the Epoch Times answers to be sent to the reporter. We are still pulling together answers on the WSJ inquiry. Thx, Micah

Approved Responses to Epoch Times inquiry

1. Did the wastewater from the Red and Bonita mine get pushed into the Gold King Mine?

***We have assessed the Red and Bonita mine and to our knowledge, it is not hydraulically connected to the Gold King Mine.***

2. What prompted the assessment - Was this a routine thing, consistent with the EPA's efforts to clean up other mines in the area?

**While the American Tunnel treatment plant operated, water quality in the Animas River improved. However, since 2005, water quality in the Animas River has not improved and, for at least 20 miles below the confluence with Cement Creek, the water quality has declined significantly. Impacts to aquatic life were also demonstrated by fish population surveys conducted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, which found no fish in the Animas River below Cement Creek for approximately two miles and observed precipitous declines in fish populations as far as 20 miles downstream since 2005.**

**Because of this declining water quality in the Animas River, in 2008, EPA's Superfund Site Assessment program began investigations in Upper Cement Creek focused on evaluating whether the Upper Cement Creek area would qualify for inclusion on the NPL. This evaluation indicated that the area would qualify, although after receiving additional community input, EPA postponed efforts to include the area on the National Priorities List. Since that time, EPA has continued and broadened its investigations of conditions at the site in order to understand the major sources of heavy metal contamination in the Upper Animas.**

3. What was the deciding factor that led to the assessment on Aug. 5, 2015?

**The removal assessment at the Gold King Mine had been planned in conjunction with a plan to install a bulkhead (plug) at the nearby Red and Bonita Mine.**

4. What is the plan going forward regarding the plethora of leaky mines in Silverton and throughout Colorado? Will Good Samaritans be deployed to continue the cleanup or will the EPA continue to lead the efforts?

**Once the investigation of the Gold King Mine is completed, EPA will issue guidance on future mine work.**

5. A previous study indicates this mine was considered a high priority for clean up. When was the last time it was assessed? Were there any prior attempts to clean it?

**August 5, 2015 was our first attempt to assess the Gold King Mine and we have not been involved in any prior attempts to clean it up. There have been ongoing site assessments in that watershed mentioned above that have supported the goal to investigate Gold King Mine. The Colorado Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety was monitoring the Gold King mine situation and ultimately conducted a limited action to stabilize the Gold King portal, secured the opening and channeled the flow in 2009.**

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**From:** Smith, Paula  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 20, 2015 1:56 PM  
**To:** EOC Public Information  
**Cc:** McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa  
**Subject:** FOR YOUR ACTION: WSJ and Epoch times q's gathered and submitted today

Can you share with us ASAP when available?

**Paula J. Smith**

Director, Office of Communication and Public Involvement

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**From:** Harrison, Melissa  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 20, 2015 9:05 AM  
**To:** McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa  
**Cc:** Smith, Paula; Mylott, Richard  
**Subject:** Re: WSJ and Epoch times q's gathered and submitted today

You'll need to track with the EOC.

Melissa Harrison

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On Aug 20, 2015, at 10:59 AM, McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa <[Mcclain-Vanderpool.Lisa@epa.gov](mailto:Mcclain-Vanderpool.Lisa@epa.gov)> wrote:

I sent it to them. Can someone let us in R8 know when they've gone through and are going to reporters?

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

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**From:** Harrison, Melissa  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 20, 2015 8:54 AM  
**To:** McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa  
**Cc:** Smith, Paula; Mylott, Richard  
**Subject:** Re: WSJ and Epoch times q's gathered and submitted today

These need to be run through the EOC. I also suggest adding language to the question on Superfund designation that outlines the need for community support etc. It really needs to be a more robust answer.

I also suggest adding these to the FAQs on the website. It would be helpful to point people to these answers.

Thanks!

Melissa

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On Aug 19, 2015, at 11:33 PM, McClain-Vanderpool, Lisa <[Mcclain-Vanderpool.Lisa@epa.gov](mailto:Mcclain-Vanderpool.Lisa@epa.gov)> wrote:

Lisa McClain-Vanderpool

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